

VVAN FY20 4th Quarter Member Business Meeting

Date: November 19, 2020 at 2pm

Meeting took place via ZOOM/on-line due to COVID19

Minutes submitted by Sharron Saunders

Members in attendance: Cristi Lawton-VVAN Executive Director; Robin Bostic-VVAN President (King William and King & Queen V/WAPs); Mary Anne Freshwater- VVAN 2nd Vice President (Appomattox V/WP); Mindy Stell-VVAN Treasurer (Dinwiddie V/WAP); Jon Zug-VVAN Board Member at Large (Albemarle Circuit Court County Clerk's Office); Laurie Crawford-VVAN Board Member at Large (VDSS); Joyce Walsh (Retired from Chesapeake V/WAP) Board Member at Large; Paul Davis-VVAN Board Member at Large (Albemarle County Sheriff's Office); Sharron Saunders-VVAN Secretary (City of Richmond V/WS); Kyanna Perkins (Office of Attorney General); Lesia Wheeler (Alleghany V/W); Amber Leake (DOC Victim Services Unit); Anika Virgin (York County V/W); Judy Holl (Alexandria V/W); Mary Sharpe (OAG); Morgan Abbate (OAG); Ronnie Sidney (Essex Co. V/W); Susan Painter (Albemarle Co. V/W); Dawn Childers (Albemarle Co. V/W); Cindy Sams (Prince Edward Co. V/W); Mary Booker (City of Lynchburg V/W); Lourdes Gordillo Montoya (Latinos in VA Empowerment Center); Mary Atterholt (Middlesex Co. V/W); Kay Bullock (VVF); Anne Jones (Roanoke Co. V/W); Taryn Giroux (Henrico Co. V/W); Lesia Wheeler (Alleghany Co. V/W); Sharon Reed (Washington Co. V/W); Deidre Hasty-Martin (VA DOC); Laura Moore (Accomack Co. V/W); Patty Strathmann (VWAP City Of Chesapeake); Camp Comfort Zone Volunteer Speakers: Sarah-Keel Crews-Camp Coordinator & Richmond Police Department Lt. Anthony Jackson

Meeting Called to Order: at approximately 2:05pm by Robin Bostic (VVAN President)

Announcements: No announcements

Comfort Zone Camp Presentation: presented by Sarah-Keel Crews Camp Coordinator & RPD Lt. Anthony Jackson-Volunteer

CZC is a 501(c) (3) bereavement camp for kids and young adults ages seven to 25 who have lost a parent, sibling, or primary giver. The camps are held on the weekends free of charge year around up and down the east and west coasts of VA. The campers are matched one to one with a "Big Buddy" of the same gender for mentorship and support throughout the camp experience. The kids and young adults are broken down into peer based support groups called "Healing Circles" which are led by mental health professionals. Other activities are presented to help the kids and young adults bond and talk about their grief. Due to COVID19 CZC has been providing virtual at home camps via ZOOM. For questions contact Sarah-Crews at: skcrews@comfortzonecamp.org or www.comfortzonecamp.org. Richmond Police Department

Lt. Anthony Jackson expressed his experience as a 15 year Big Buddy volunteer. He has noticed that children are often over-looked with-in the criminal justice process. He also expressed a need for more volunteers as well as more youth and young adult referrals.

Secretary's Report - Approval of Minutes: submitted by Sharron Saunders (Richmond City V/WS)

* Motion made to approve the 3rd Quarter VVAN Business Member minutes as written; a second motion was received; no comments or concerns; all voted in favor; the minutes were approved and adopted by the Business Members.

Treasurer's Report: submitted by Mindy Stell (Dinwiddie V/WAP)

As of October 31, 2020 our regular account was \$161,984.02 and the grant account balance totaled: \$64,972.36.

Executive Director's Report: submitted by Cristi Lawton (VVAN Executive Director)

Financial

Anne Di Donato was hired as the new full-time Finance and Office Manager. She's a certified book keeper and understands Quick Books. She's doing a great job at improving systems and operations.

Audit/990

The audit report was submitted to DCJS and the 990 has been filed with the IRS. Anne is currently working on the 2020 year-end audit and preparing the 990 for 2020.

VOCA VSGP Grants

The FY2022 to FY2023 solicitation has been released and the maximum grant award is now \$500,000 per year with no guarantee that the maximum amount will be awarded. Our current VOCA grant is \$724,209 meaning \$224,209 will need to be cut from the FY22/23 future organizational budgets. Staffing and programs will be affected by this grant cut. The Board will discuss budget cuts at a later date.

Program Updates (VOCA)

The Legal Services Program is busy with a broad requests for legal assistance and is working with the Victims' Rights Committee.

Homicide Survivor Support Groups

There are 13 active HSGs and a virtual statewide HSG supported by VVAN. Contact the HSG Coordinator Dina Blythe if you do would like to refer a client to the statewide HSG.

We were approved private grant funding from the Cameron Foundation to help with establishing a HSG in Petersburg. A virtual ceremony was sponsored on September 25th in honor of National Homicide Survivor Remembrance Day.

This committee is planning to launch a National Coalition for homicide survivor grief programs.

This committee is also discussing a HSG to service immigrants assisted by the International Rescue Committee.

Regional Crisis Response Teams

A regional CRT responded to a Charles City County homicide to support the family. Other miscellaneous CRT services were also provided last quarter.

Victim Assist Helpline & Human Trafficking InfoLine

Calls have increased to the new website "chat feature".

Training Updates (OVC) and Improving Criminal Justice Response Grant (ICJR)

VVAN and the Action Alliance partnered to offer a virtual Basic Intensive Advocacy Training (BIAT) training in October, 2020. This training is structured for both new Victim Witness system based and community advocates.

A virtual training is being developed for the Basic Victim Assistance Academy to be held in late January or February, 2021.

The in-person Victim Witness/Coalition Building session has been continued again due to COVID19. It's tentatively being continued to March 2021.

OVC Grant

Plans are being developed for a virtual Basic Victim Assistance Academy to occur in January/February 2021.

An in-person Victim/Witness Coalition Forum has been tentatively scheduled for March 2021 but may need to be continued due to COVID19.

A Justice 3-D: The Navigating Victims' Issues training event was offered in November, 2020 as a replacement for the cancelled annual in-person conference which has been tentatively rescheduled for the spring of 2021.

Marketing/Public Relations

Facebook Ads promoting the Statewide HSG were submitted. An E-Newsletter and the 2019 annual report were distributed.

Fund Development

Several grant applications are pending to help supplement the gaps left by the VOCA grant cuts.

Membership

Renewal invoices for 2021 will be automatically generated in December, 2020.

A new "Chatter" membership benefit is under development to allow members another way to communicate with each other and share resources. Along with a membership "sticker" that members can place on their website and/or in their office.

Strategic Planning

Plans are in development to establish VVAN's future goals and priorities. The Spark Mill Consulting Firm will host the strategic planning sessions. Meetings will occur over the fall and winter to include several online Zoom sessions with the staff and Board. A survey was emailed to stakeholders, members, and V/W programs to get their feedback as part of the strategic planning process.

Committee Reports

Finance & Fundraising Committee Morgan Abbate (OAG)

This committee is offering Amazon Smile as a fund raiser. VVAN will receive a donation based on qualified items purchased on Amazon. We're on the waiting list for "The Restaurant Nights" fund raiser. Plans are being developed for other virtual events like; paint, cooking, or wine night sessions where access will require a minimum or set amount to be donated to VVAN.

Legislative Committee Robin Bostic (King William County and King & Queen V/WAP)

This information is being presented for educational and informational purposes. Most bills were tabled. Here's a list of bills that could affect victims of crimes:

HB 5062 & SB 5033-Court authority in criminal cases; prosecutorial discretion to dispose of a criminal case.

Requires a court to grant a motion to dismiss made by the Commonwealth, whether with or without prejudice, and with the consent of the defendant unless the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the motion was made as the result of (i) bribery or (ii) bias or prejudice toward a victim because of the race, religious conviction, gender, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, color, or national origin of the victim. The bill provides that, upon the agreement of the Commonwealth and the defendant, a trial court may defer proceedings; defer entry of a conviction order, if none, or defer entry of a final order; and continue the case for final disposition, on such reasonable terms and conditions as may be agreed upon by the parties.

HB 2004-Virginia Freedom of Information Act; law-enforcement criminal incident information; criminal investigative files. Adds criminal investigative files, defined in the bill, relating to a criminal investigation or proceeding that is not ongoing, also defined in the bill, to the types of law-enforcement and criminal records required to be released in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. Under current law, the release of criminal investigative files is discretionary. The bill also provides that the mandatory release of criminal incident information relating to felony offenses and criminal investigative files shall be enjoined if a court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the release of such information would likely effect certain results, outlined in the bill. The bill contains technical amendments. This bill is a recommendation of the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council.

HB 5148 & SB5007-Department of Corrections; earned sentence credits. 4.5 credits maybe earned on for each 30 days served on certain sentences.

(This bill excludes most top violent felonies such as murder, malicious wounding, child sex crimes, etc.)

Establishes a four-level classification system for the awarding and calculation of earned sentence credits. The bill also specifies certain crimes that are subject to the maximum 4.5 earned sentence credits for each 30 days served that is permitted under current law. The bill provides that the Department of Corrections shall convene in due course a work group to study the impact of the sentence credit amendments set forth in the act. The bill directs the work group to report to the Governor and the General Assembly by July 1, 2021, the membership of the work group and the work group's plan for conducting such study, including any data and information upon which the work group will rely in conducting such study, and to report its finding and conclusions to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2022. The remainder of the bill has a delayed effective date of January 1, 2022, and requires the calculation of earned sentence credits to apply retroactively to the entire sentence of any inmate who is confined in a state correctional facility and participating in the earned sentence credit system on January 1, 2022. As introduced, this bill was a recommendation of the Virginia State Crime Commission.

SB 5007-Criminal cases; sentencing reform, procedure for trial by jury, etc.

Provides that in a criminal case the court shall ascertain the extent of the punishment unless the accused has requested that the jury ascertain punishment or was found guilty of capital murder. The bill also provides that if a jury cannot agree on a punishment, the court shall fix punishment. The bill has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2021.

Victims' Rights Committee Kyanna Perkins (OAG)

This committee met to discuss the following:

-Research to establish a Crime Victims' Rights Ombudsman in VA that could possibly be housed in the Office of the Attorney General, as they have expressed interest. Sarah Okolita (part-time LSP Coordinator), Sarah Ford (VVAN LSP training and program development consultant and attorney with the South Carolina Victim Assistance Network), and Sarika Reuben (LSP Attorney) worked together to discuss and research states who currently have an Ombudsman, including how they determined the best location to house the position. The OAG now has this research and is considering next steps.

-To address resuming of jury trials and how some jury plans did not include victims or Victim Witness Services personnel. As of this committee's last meeting date 28 plans had been approved by the VA Supreme Court. From this committee's research only the Richmond City jury plan included the approved presence of a victim and a Victim/Witness Services personnel. Some Commonwealth Attorney Offices are filing motions to allow the presence of victims and Victim/Witness Services personnel. Some of these motions have not been successful. Some judges are allowing in the victim but no Victim/Witness Services personnel for support.

-The best way to encourage Commonwealth Attorney Offices to advise or inform victims to sign a confidentiality form so that the victim's information can be redacted in regards to defense discovery motions. This committee has reached out to several civil attorneys to address the lack of identifying these victim rights issues.

-The best way to allow pro bono civil attorneys to assist victims with their rights in court when the Commonwealth Attorney's Office has chosen (by their discretion) not to prosecute the defendant. Most of these cases involve misdemeanor charges.

-Nancy Ogelsby has offered to help create a statewide victim confidentiality form.

Program Committee Laurie Crawford (VDSS)

No report. This committee plans to meet before the holidays to determine hosting plans with the Hilton Hotel regarding reservations for the annual VVAN conference. All speakers have been booked. No final decision has been made concerning an in-person or an all virtual annual conference event.

Virginia Victims' Fund Committee Patty Strathmann (VWAP City of Chesapeake)

No report. Kay Bullock announced that VVF is still working from home but an on-site team is going into the office two days per week to handle administrative duties. A position for the Unclaimed Restitution Specialist position was approved. Due to budgetary cuts a vacant Claims Examiner position and sponsorship will be impacted. Claims are being processed. Homicide claims are being processed in real-time and SAFE claims are being processed within 48 hours. Contact VVF Claims Examiners or the Ombudsman for any issues. VVF will be rolling out a Full Kit Program soon.

Old Business: No old business to report.

New Business: Elections

The VVAN First Vice-President and Treasurer positions are up for election. Currently, Lindsay Cassada is the First Vice-President and Mindy Stell is the Treasurer. Both Lindsay and Mindy are eligible for an additional term of two years. Robyn did not receive nominated names or volunteers for either of these positions before today's VVAN Member Business meeting. No names were submitted or volunteered during this meeting for either position.

*A motion was made to approve the slate of names as offered. The names are Lindsay Cassada and Mindy Stell. Lindsay Cassada will continue another term as VVAN First Vice-President and Mindy Stell will continue another term as the VVAN Treasurer; a second motion was received; no comments or concerns were addressed; all voted in favor; the names submitted for the VVAN First Vice-President and the Treasurer positions were approved and adopted by the VVAN Business Members.

Next year elections will consist of the VVAN Second Vice-President and secretary positions.

Adjournment Robin Bostic (VVAN President)

* Motion made to adjourn the VVAN Member Business meeting at approximately 3:34pm; a second motion was received; all voted in favor; the VVAN Member Business Meeting was adjourned.

No scheduled date set for the next VVAN Member Business meeting.